

**From:** Anthony Valentine  
**To:** 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'  
**Date:** 1/23/02 1:38pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Ms. Hesse,

I would like to inform you of my objections to the Proposed Settlement in the Microsoft Anti-Trust case.

As a Linux user, I frequently attempt to convince people to try Linux. Very few people actually do. Most people I talk to about it say that they need Microsoft Office, and since it doesn't run on Linux, they won't try it.

I have come to the conclusion that the average person doesn't seem to care about the Operating System that runs on their computer, they care about the applications. The people I talk to say that they like what Linux can offer them in terms of cost, security and stability. However, they are willing to endure the crashes and viruses so rampant in Windows, simply because everybody else runs Office, so they have to also in order to exchange documents.

The Proposed Settlement does not require Microsoft to disclose it's Office document formats. I think that it should. This one small addition would allow people to use competing software and still be able to exchange MS Office documents. If people were able to this, most of the objections to trying Linux (or any other OS) would go away.

Openness is the key here. One of the reasons that Open Source Software is successful, is that everything is based on open standards. This openness allows anybody to write new or extend old software. The effect of this is a large number of different software packages that all do the same thing a lightly different way, giving the users a large pool of options to choose from. Which is the whole point: let the users choose what they want to run, instead of forcing them all to use one package.

I would also like to make a brief comment on the state of the economy and it's possible impact on the Settlement. I am not an economist, however some articles that I have read alluded that the Proposed Settlement is purposely lenient because the DOJ doesn't want to cripple a major US corporation in times of economic downturn. I do not know if this is true or not, however I can say that I would disagree with it if it were. Large monopolistic companies are bad for the economy (more so during an economic downturn), which is the entire purpose behind the Anti-Trust laws in the first place.

Thank you.

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